Justice for Janitors in Los Angeles and Beyond: *A New Form of Unionism in the 21st Century?*

Christopher L. Erickson

Anderson Graduate School of Management, UCLA

Catherine Fisk

Loyola Law School

Ruth Milkman

Department of Sociology, UCLA

Daniel J.B. Mitchell

Anderson Graduate School of Management and School of Public Policy and Social Research, UCLA

Kent Wong

Center for Labor Education and Research, Institute of Industrial Relations, UCLA

23rd Middlebury Economics Conference on "The Changing Role of Unions,"

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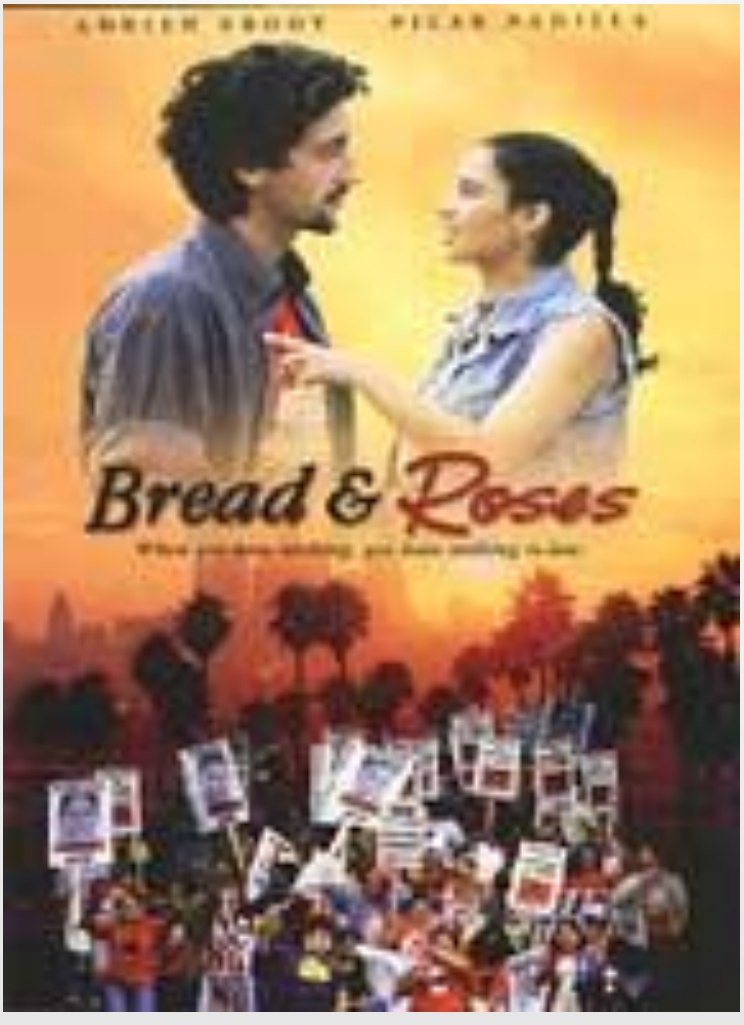
You've seen the movie...



Now hear the presentation (and read the paper)!

Justice for Janitors in Los Angeles: Why Be Interested?

- **General Union Decline**
  - **1980: 25.7% of wage and salary workers**
  - **2001: 14.8% of wage and salary workers**
  - **Less than a tenth of private sector**
  - **Major drop in NLRB representation elections in early 1980s**
  - **Concession bargaining**
- **Is there something new here that could stem union decline?**

Justice for Janitors in Los Angeles: Why Be Interested?

- Changing Demographics
- Income Inequality
- Can Public Attitudes Toward Immigrants, Working Poor, Unions, Be Use as an Organizing Tool?
- Generalizable Story?

Justice for Janitors in Los Angeles: Background

- **The Early History of Building Services Unionization**
  - **Chicago Origins of the BSEIU**
  - **Developments in California (Local 399: Janitors and Kaiser health care workers)**
  - **Los Angeles Janitors at Mid-20th Century**
  - **Racial and Ethnic Composition**

Justice for Janitors in Los Angeles

- Impact of 1980s
  - De-unionization...
  - …despite new construction
  - National SEIU sends in outsiders as organizers
  - Development of JfJ Tactics
  - Industry Concentration (ISS & ABM)
  - The Century City Incident (1990)

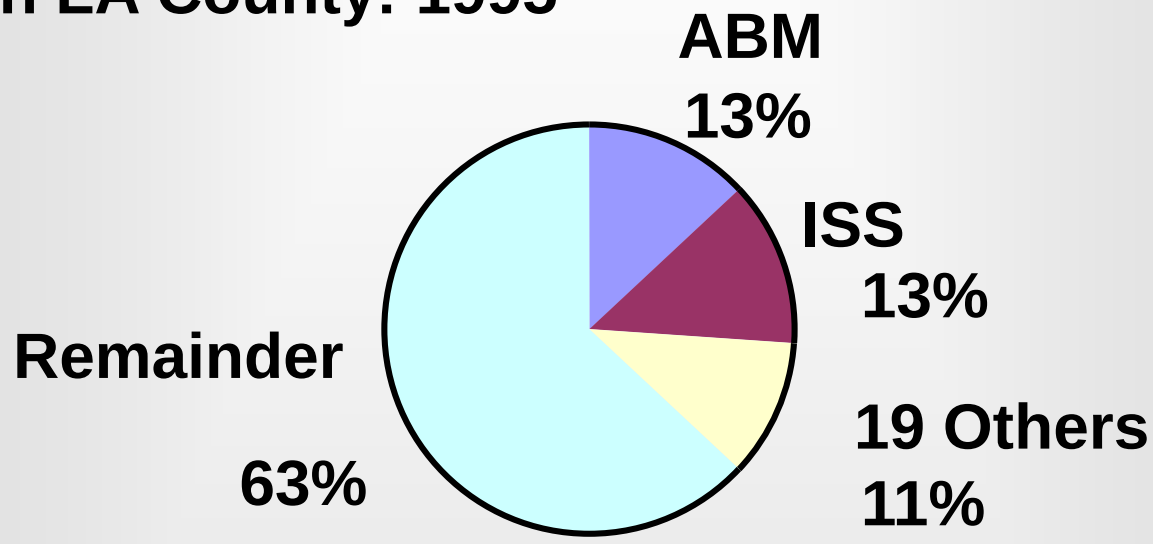
ISS

ABM Industries Incorporated
New York Stock Exchange Symbol: ABM

Industry Concentration

Chart 1A:

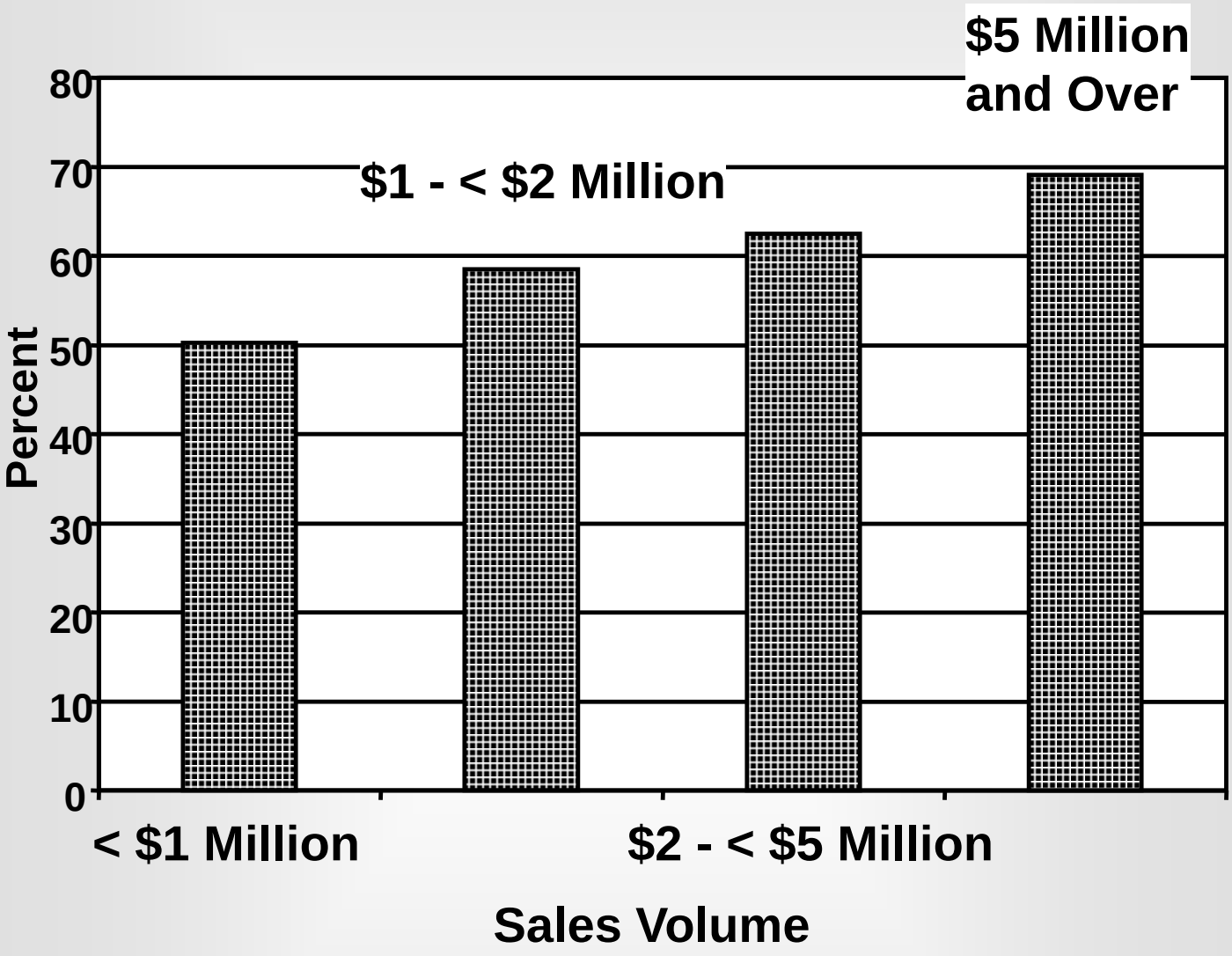
Division of Janitorial Employment in LA County: 1995



Most janitors work for small contractors but that is not true in big "Class A" buildings

Chart 1B

Direct Labor Expense as Percent of Revenue: 2000



Direct janitorial labor costs are key to competitive bidding IF contractors compete on wages

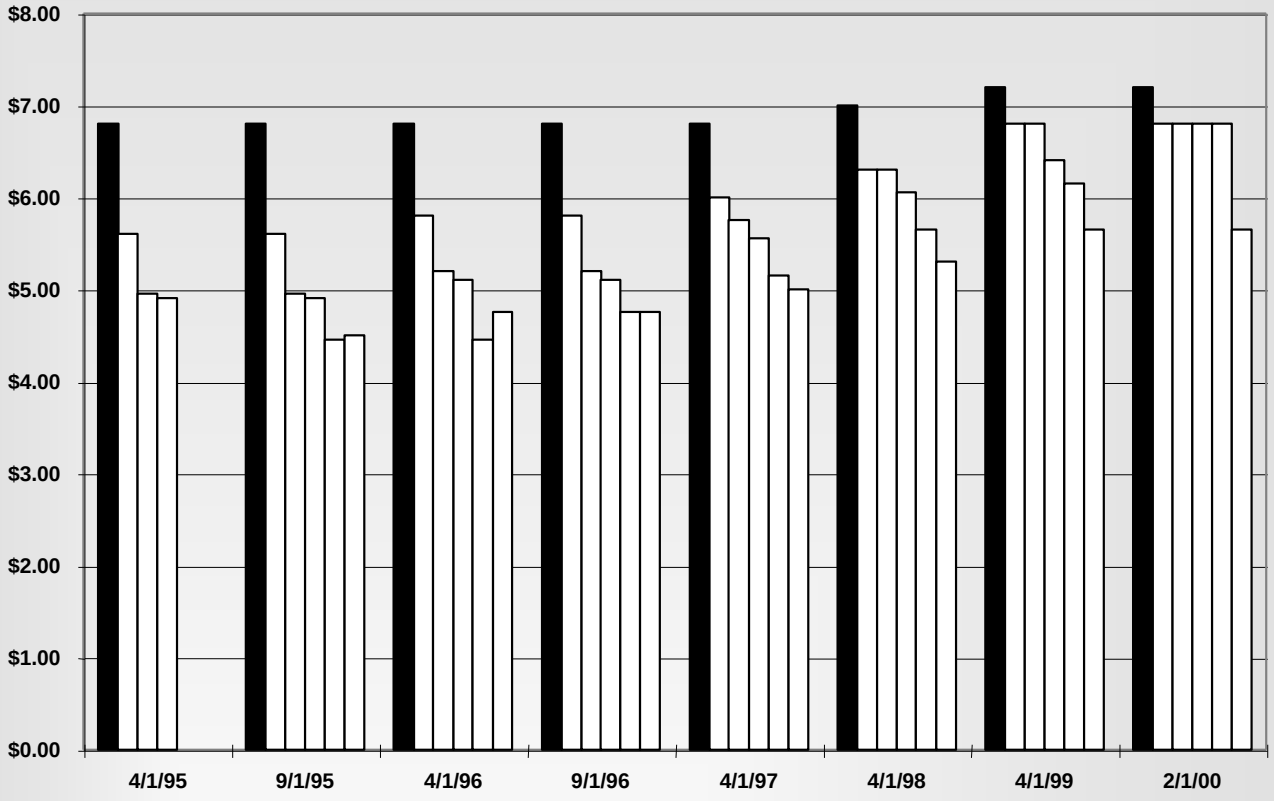
Justice for Janitors in Los Angeles

- **The Secondary Boycott Problem**
- **The First Contract**
- **Internal Problems Arise**
  - Kaiser vs. janitors
  - Ethnic tensions
  - Organizing vs. contract administration

- **Round II (1995)**
  - Economic Conditions at Round II
  - Changes in Building Ownership (lenders)
  - Backloading the New Contract

Complex core vs. outlying area wage (and benefit) structure

Chart 2: Minimum Hourly Wage for Cleaners: 1995-2000 Maintenance Contractors Agreement

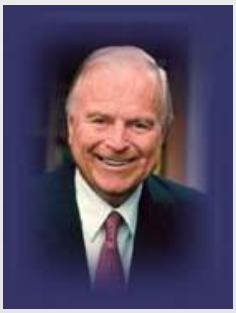


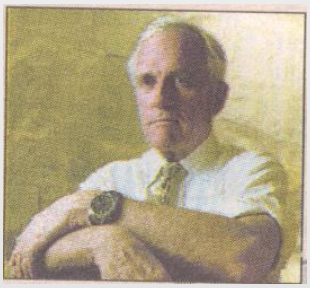
Note: Bars from left to right refer to Areas 1, 2, 2A, 3, 4, and 5. No minimums were specified for Areas 4 and 5 until 9/1/95.

Area 1 = Downtown L.A., Century City
Area 2 = Wilshire Corridor, Beverly Hills, LAX, Westwood
Area 2A = Santa Monica, Culver City
Area 3 = Pasadena, Hollywood, Long Beach, Glendale/Burbank,South Bay, Commerce
Area 4 = Studio City/Sherman Oaks, Woodland Hills/West Valley
Area 5 = Other areas of L.A. County

Justice for Janitors in Los Angeles

- **Round III: Background**
  - **New Ownership, New Attitudes (REITs, Partnerships)**
  - **The Cleaning Contractors (ABM & One Source)**
  - **Union Restructuring (399/1877)**
  - **Political Conditions in Los Angeles (Riordan, Mahony, Maguire)**





  - **State Politics (Davis)**

Justice for Janitors in Los Angeles

- Round III: Background continued
  - Avoiding the Secondary Boycott Problem
  - Support from Other Unions
  - Creative Street Theater
    - Large-Scale Protests and the Problem of Injunctions
    - Legal Limits on Picketing
    - Injunction Legislation
  - New California Anti-Injunction Statute (1999) defused injunction threat

Justice for Janitors in Los Angeles

- **Round III: Union Strategy**
  - **A New Form of Pattern Bargaining**
    - **Not Traditional (taking wages out of competition)**
    - **Reputational**
  - **Reputation Effects**

Problem: Large vs. Small Contractors

Justice for Janitors in Los Angeles

- **The Strike of 2000**
  - The Strike Begins
  - Relations With the Police
  - Legal Strategy
  - External Support (Media & Public)
  - Union, Political, and Religious Support
  - Pressures on Both Sides
  - A Deal is Struck
- **Key Features of the 2000 Agreement**

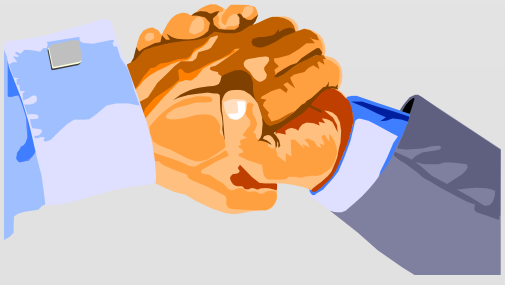
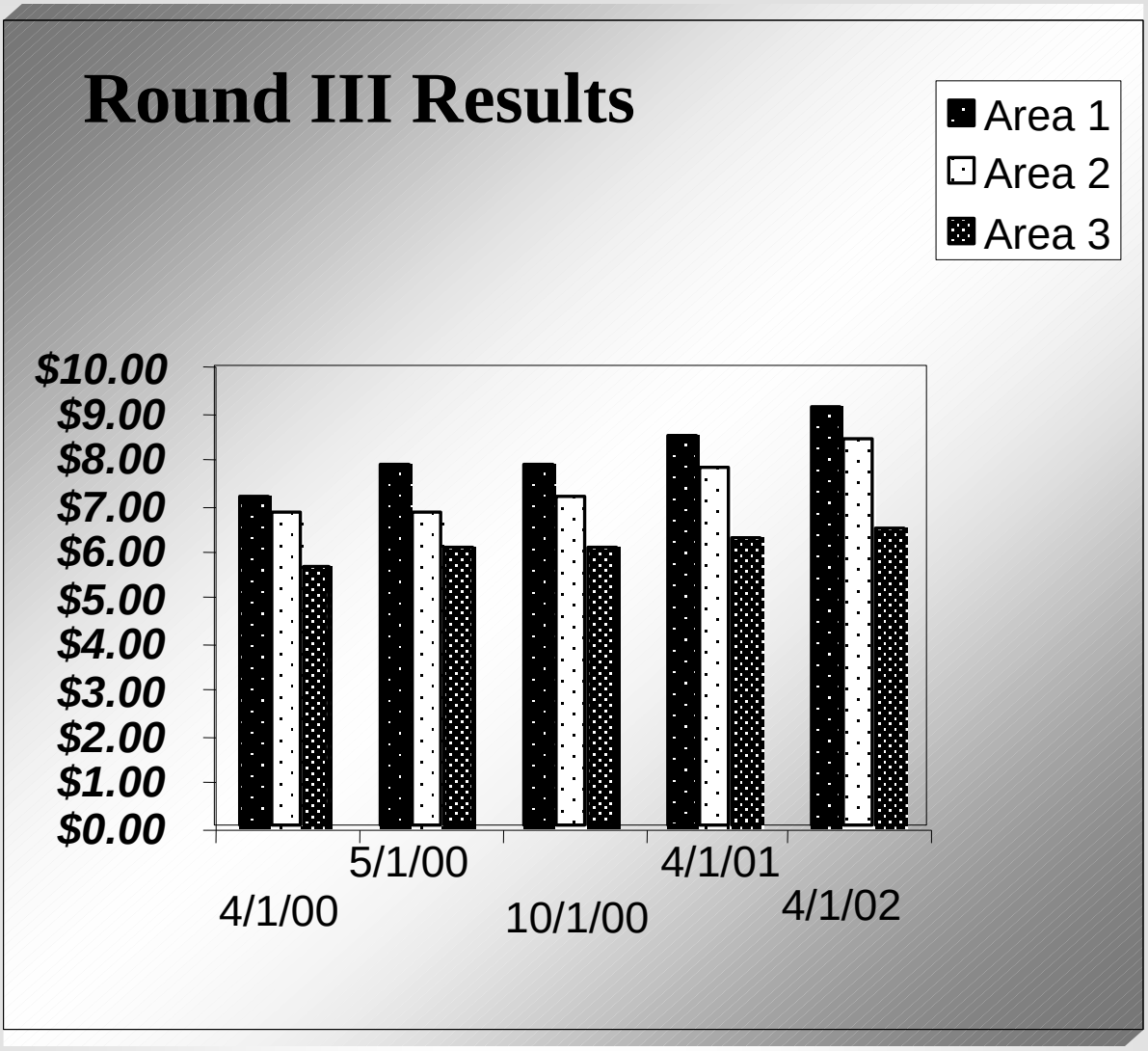


Chart 3



Area 1: Downtown LA and Century City
Area 2: Wilshire Corridor, Beverly Hills, LAX, Westwood, Westside Area, Pasadena, Hollywood, Long Beach, Glendale/Burbank, South Bay, City of Commerce, Studio City/Sherman Oaks, Woodland ills/West Valley.
Area 3: Greater Los Angeles County

Simplified wage (and benefit) structure with more homogeneity

Justice for Janitors in Los Angeles

- Ability to spread organizing to other janitorial settings
  - Orange County
  - Supermarkets in LA area

Justice for Janitors in Los Angeles

- Other Lessons and Questions from the Janitors Experience
  - Can organize seemingly-unorganizable immigrant workers despite legal and other barriers
  - Sustainability
  - Role of PR/politics
  - Targeting a non-tradable service
  - Concentrated industrial structure
- Hotel parallel but less success: Why?

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